

ADDRESS BY STROM THURMOND BEFORE AMERICAN LEGION  
SPRING RALLY, COLUMBIA, S. C., MONDAY, MARCH 24,  
1952, 3:00 P.M.

Permanent Preparedness

As we Americans study the realities of our troubled and disordered world, we must recognize that conditions on this earth are not what they were when we were children. The international situation following World War II bears very little resemblance to that following the first world war. In fact, it has no precedence in history.

We live in a changed world. Its aspects are unfamiliar and, it must be admitted, somewhat frightening. We cannot solve the difficulties of today by leaning upon the precepts of the past. History can help us some, but not much, as we seek an intelligent solution for the great twentieth century dilemma.

We must cut new patterns. New trails have to be blazed. We must write our own history according to the demands of the hour.

Americans need not fear to face that necessity and to act upon it. Remember, Americans have always blazed new trails. It is our tradition. We have looked upon the wilderness without fear, and we have shaped it to our needs. We have made new designs in government, and found new ways to freedom. There is no need for Americans to lean too heavily upon old ways. Come what may, we can



afford full confidence that we will meet the challenge before us.

The challenge of which I speak means a somewhat revolutionary change in our attitude toward national preparedness. We must learn a new way of thinking on that subject, for our traditional attitudes are inadequate if we are to play our role in the world drama of our times.

Americans have always responded with wholehearted enthusiasm when an international crisis presented itself. Under the threats of aggression abroad, we have consistently and successfully aroused ourselves to the military necessities dictated by each crisis. Our record in history is made glorious by our national unity and the results we have achieved because of it. It is also true, however, that when the crisis has passed, we have customarily sloughed off the burden of military demands and returned rather abruptly to the civilian world which we have learned to love so dearly. That is only natural when you remember that our national characteristics are dominated by peaceful thinking.

It is regrettable, but only too true, that the world today will no longer lend itself to such an attitude on the part of American citizens. We can no longer face the military situation on the basis of meeting a crisis as it arises and then retiring into



peaceful pursuits without further thought of war. We must create for ourselves a habit of permanent preparedness under which we shall be ready for war at any time and anywhere in the world.

It now appears probable that real, permanent world peace may be many decades in the future. Since an armistice was signed by Japan, we have seen little to indicate that genuine world peace is an immediate possibility. In the last year or two, it would seem that peace has been pushed further into the future. Dangerous tensions are building up in many areas of the world, and usually, of course, in places where the communists seek to spread their godless, barbaric ideologies.

This being the case, we must examine the situation frankly and we must realistically state our own role in meeting the conditions. To play that role, we know now that we must have a plan for permanent preparedness which will last for many, many years-- as far as we can presently peer into the future. It must be a plan for partial mobilization which can be turned into full mobilization almost instantly.

This is a new concept. We have never before been faced with a need for partial mobilization. Heretofore, it has always been "feast or famine." Fresh viewpoints and a fresh approach are not only desirable, but absolutely mandatory.



It is to the shame of our political leaders that the American people have not yet been handed a complete plan embodying such an approach. It is not the fault of the people themselves that our state of preparedness is not adequate to meet the threat of communism. You and I know that when the American citizen is made fully aware of his role that he will fulfill it.

Let us think for a few minutes about a plan for permanent preparedness. What shall it include?

First of all, we must plan on a global basis. The old expression "globaloney" invented by a witty female in Congress is no longer funny. The conception that national defense means, to Americans, a way to "protect these shores" from invasion is not sufficient for these times. In the realistic view, our frontiers are the edges of the iron curtain wherever it has fallen across the world.

It is discouraging, but it is a fact that the United States stands alone as a bulwark against communism. No other nation-- indeed, no group of nations-- is prepared to meet that threat. Unless America stands squarely against the Kremlin, the Kremlin will prevail. We cannot permit such a catastrophe, and we will not.



Our plan, therefore, should provide for preparedness on the part of every nation which today stands in the path of communism. If that means arming them, then we must arm them just as we would our own citizens against invading armies. America needs the help of all men who will turn their hands against communism, whatever language they may speak.

Along with a sound plan for world-wide containment of communism, we need an adequate military policy, a sound, firm, foreign policy, an effective method of psychological warfare for democracy, and a home front strengthened by internal security. It is these points for permanent preparedness that I want us to consider at this time.

The paramount military issue of the day is the war in Korea. We should win that war and be done with it. The truce negotiations have dragged out for so long that the world finds it difficult to determine to whom the victory belongs. Meanwhile, the communists are making use of the truce talks as a sounding board for their propaganda. The talks have all the aspect of a political meeting rather than a military one.

It is not a pretty sight to see American generals tied up in apparently hopeless negotiations while our soldiers continue to



die every day in the fighting. I think it is more in the American tradition to win the battles and then dictate the peace terms. Perhaps it is too late for that now. Our obligations to our partners in the United Nations would not permit a complete reversal of policy at this point. Nevertheless, I believe that if our military leaders in Korea are given free reign, they will bring the fighting to a close on terms acceptable to the United Nations. Failing that, they most certainly can renew the campaign and force the enemy into military submission.

A determined policy is needed in Korea. We have proof that such a policy will pay off in the fact that it took four months to get Red China to agree to an armistice line other than the 38th. The Chinese had insisted all along that they would not settle for anything else than the 38th parallel, but they did. Without further dallying, Red China should be put on notice that the talks will be brought to an end within a given period or the fighting will be resumed. That is the only realistic policy.

Although we have lost some face in Korea, we need not feel too badly. The principal United Nations objective, that of halting the aggressor and pushing him out of South Korea, has been attained. During the negotiations, military action has been very limited. Since June, 1950, we have had something over 100,000



casualties, and of the 76,000 wounded only 1,700 have died. This is high tribute to the effectiveness of our medical service in Korea, which has been outstanding. In World War I, eight out of every 100 wounded died; in World War II, four out of every 100; in the Korean war, two out of every 100. Of those who are wounded, 50% can go back into the line.

The Korean fighting has demonstrated graphically our need to build up a strong Air Force. We must look forward to the eventual development of a force of 150 groups. Military leaders now believe that the present 95-group aim is too low, and, indeed, Air Force Chief of Staff General Vandenberg has termed our present force a "shoe-string" Air Force in view of its global responsibilities. The Strategic Air Force is still the world's most powerful military instrument. Nevertheless, the capacity of our Air Force to deliver the atomic bomb is not keeping pace with atomic development. Meanwhile, the Russians are out-producing us in aircraft. General Vandenberg has estimated that it will take the United States until 1954 to match the Russians in the air. Nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of this aircraft building program.

As to our ground forces, we are squarely confronted with two choices: We can maintain a large standing military establishment



over a long period of years, or we can institute a program of universal military training which will make a large standing army unnecessary.

I sincerely believe that the tremendous expense of maintaining a large standing army over a long period would eventually bring our nation to bankruptcy. An insolvent nation cannot remain a free nation for long. On the other hand, an intelligent system of universal military training would provide a backlog of experienced men which would guarantee the national defense at a comparatively low cost.

Although the Congress has again rejected UMT, I still believe we must come to it as the only logical way to protect America. It is our best hope for a workable plan of permanent preparedness. The young man reaching the age of 18 years today stands in grave danger of having to risk his life in battle before he is 21. That is the unfortunate fact. We must not send him into battle untrained--where he may perish in the early stages of fighting because he did not know the ropes. We have sent untrained men into battle many times in the past. Universal military training is the best possible way in which we can train our youth to protect themselves and thereby protect our country.



To back up this plan, we must continue to strengthen our reserve components and to maintain them at a high degree of efficiency, thus utilizing the brains and experience of the past.

The same careful attention and long-range planning must be given to the development of an adequate Navy, equipped with the finest ships and equipment. A strong Navy may well become the means of carrying the war to other shores rather than fighting it on our own soil. The same is true of the Marine Corps.

The best plan for permanent preparedness, from the strictly military viewpoint, entails powerful, alert striking forces from the Army, the Navy, the Marines, and the Air Corps, backed up by a deep well of reserve strength in trained civilians.

There are several things we can do to help bring about such an organization. One of the most important is further integration of the armed forces through the adoption of a single catalogue system. There is much evidence of waste and duplication in the buying for the Armed Forces. Competitive buying among the various units weakens the economic strength of our nation, with an estimated extra cost of five billions a year. It is not compatible with the philosophy of unification of the armed services, and it just doesn't make sense. The development of an adequate single catalogue system will cost much



money and great effort, but it will be worth it in time and money saved and in increased efficiency, and it should be undertaken with all possible speed.

A problem of prime importance in developing permanent preparedness is that of building a more adequate merchant marine. Our merchant marine has recently been on the downgrade. In 1947 American ships carried 59% of our overseas trade. In 1950 they carried only 38% of it. This trend must be reversed if we are to be prepared for war. Full priority for steel and other materials should be given to our ship-building program.

In a military way we can look back upon a year of fairly satisfactory progress. During the past year we have added more than a million men to our Armed Forces. We have added 28 wings to the Air Force, increased our army divisions and returned 270 Navy vessels to active duty. We have reached two billion dollars a month in military deliveries and construction, more than three times that of a year ago. While there have been some cutbacks, the civilian population has not yet felt them very much.

The second great field of endeavor in working for permanent preparedness is our goal of a firm, clear-cut foreign policy. We still have not developed a foreign policy that Americans can understand



and believe in, and that the Russians and their satellites will respect. There is still some evidence that we are going down the dangerous road of appeasement.

At no time since the Korean war began has there been greater need for a firm policy in Asia. The entire East is a tinderbox today. The French have their hands full in Indo-China. If the Reds move in there, Indo-China might fall. Should that happen, the Red tide in Burma, Thailand, and Malaya might engulf the governments of those lands, and the whole of Southeast Asia would be in Red hands. Some foreign affairs experts believe this dangerous situation is very much like that existing with the Japanese before Pearl Harbor. The time is late, but it is never too late to adopt a firm policy in the East.

We must find ways of showing the Russians that we are determined to win world peace, but that we realize our efforts must be backed up by a nation fully prepared to fight if necessary. Too often the Russians have succeeded in making our diplomats lose sight of their long-range objectives, by harping on minor differences of the moment.

In pursuing this policy, we must take full advantage of the assistance offered by friendly nations. Such peoples must be



brought into the fold of united action against communism. One good illustration is the friendly attitude of Turkey, where we have built air fields. Turkey is strongly anti-communist. Her army numbers 400,000, all good fighters. Another illustration is Spain, whose ports the United States Sixth Fleet recently visited for the first time since 1936. Spain should be brought into the fold.

While aiding friendly countries, we must also take firm steps to withhold any kind of assistance from communist-minded nations. In some cases, American shipments of goods have been finding their way into Iron Curtain countries. Such shipments must be stopped.

Finally, our foreign policy should include continued full support of the United Nations. This organization is not a world government, and not even a start toward one, as its relationships are with sovereign states and it is restricted from involving itself with internal affairs. I firmly believe that the United Nations is the greatest step ever taken by mankind toward the outlawing of war. It has proved its effectiveness in Korea, in Greece, and in other parts of the world, and we must continue to bolster it with our full participation.



The third point in our permanent preparedness effort should be a more effective psychological warfare program. This program, if it is handled in a realistic and intelligent way, can help to spread the concepts of democracy which are so vital in combating communism. At this time our psychological program is too weak to be effective. Our enemies know this, and they are taking advantage of it. Russia is spending \$40,000,000 a year for pamphlets alone. Other communist countries are spending from a hundred to six hundred million dollars a year on propaganda. The communist organization in France alone has an annual budget of \$150,000,000.

We have recently organized a Psychological Strategy Board for the purpose of working out long-range strategy. This is a step in the right direction, for it unifies the efforts of the State Department, the Department of Defense, and the Central Intelligence Agency.

We must sell democracy throughout the world, for it is the best answer to communism.

Our final aim in laying down a plan for permanent preparedness should be the maintenance of a unified home front backed by a sound national economy.



To accomplish this purpose, non-essential, non-defense expenditures must be kept to an absolute minimum. This year the Congress was asked to appropriate eighty-five billion dollars, presumably because of increased military spending. However, financial experts tell us that the bill also represents an increase of ten billions for non-defense purposes. That is a dangerous request in these times. We are rapidly approaching the day when we will be spending ourselves out of business. Senator Harry F. Byrd, of Virginia, one of the nation's greatest experts in fiscal policy, says the financial peril confronting us is as great as the threat of war itself. He believes that from six to eight billions in non-essential spending can be eliminated, and his effort to eliminate it should have the support of all loyal Americans.

Along with a sound fiscal policy, we must have all-out industrial production for our defense needs, carrying with it priority allocations of critical materials strictly aligned with the preparedness program. Our vast industrial potential, which meant so much in World War II, must be utilized to the greatest possible extent.

Already, industry is gearing itself for a long-range program to meet military requirements. The military consumed 12% of the gross national product last year, and will probably consume 18%



of the national product in 1952, which means a sizeable gain. As industry expands to meet the requirements, the advisability of decentralization should always be kept in mind, not only from the standpoint of possible attack from the air, but to equalize the burden of production throughout the country.

Within industry and inside our government circles, we must be eternally vigilant in keeping down the threat of communist infiltration. In recent years we have made some strides in exposing the communists who have sometimes penetrated to the most secret places of our national life. This effort must continue unabated, else we may wake up one day to find alien hands at our very vitals.

Finally, in building our design for internal security, we must develop an adequate program of civilian defense for critical areas. Needless to say, this effort may vary considerably from one community to another. Some communities may feel that no effort at all is needed. Others, finding themselves located in the vicinity of vulnerable military installations or vast industrial developments, should work out an integrated plan so that every citizen will know what to do and how to do it in the event of an enemy attack.

We cannot overlook the possibility of an atomic attack, and even a successful one. The Chief of our Air Force has said that



at least 70% of an attacking force could penetrate our air defenses. That means atomic bombs could be dropped on our cities in spite of the efforts of our air screen. Knowing this fact, Americans cannot fail to prepare themselves.

There we have it-- a four-pronged plan for permanent preparedness; an adequate military establishment; a firm foreign policy; an effective psychological warfare program; and a sound national economy making for internal security.

We can accomplish this aim without becoming a militaristic nation. There is no need to fear that the American citizen, who is a man of peaceful pursuits, will be converted into an aggressive military type. Americans are too straight-forward in their thinking to allow such a thing to come about.

It is, after all, a responsibility of the American citizen. Knowing him as I believe I do, I have every faith in his ability to defend his country and to stop the onslaught of communism wherever he meets it throughout the world.